

important life skills. To build on their efforts to develop the next generation of responsible and active citizens, they offer many services that equip parents with information about community resources, such as food, housing, and GED classes. They also do an exemplary job of addressing the many interests and needs of young people, whether it's a t-shirt design contest, tech training or tutoring during their homework hour. The Boys and Girls Club of Las Vegas helps Nevada children excel as young people in countless ways, and the lessons last a lifetime.

In 2007 alone, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas served more than 15,000 youth across the valley. From Mount Charleston to Boulder City and many points in between, the clubs continue to reach youth in a positive way.

I am proud to stand with the Boys and Girls Club of Las Vegas to congratulate the organization for 50 years of helping Las Vegas families and young people.

HAITI REFORESTATION ACT OF 2011

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have had the opportunity to visit Haiti on a number of occasions and have always been moved by the kindness and generosity of the Haitian people who live under such hard conditions.

I have traveled for hours into rural Haiti to visit impressive programs such as Partners In Health's health clinic, which provides HIV/AIDS treatment and clean water for nursing mothers.

Unfortunately, despite such programs and the efforts of U.N. peacekeeping forces to bring some measure of security to Haiti, the living conditions for average Haitians remains deeply troubling.

An already weak political system and weak government were then confronted last year with a devastating earthquake that struck Haiti's densely populated capitol of Port au Prince and several surrounding towns.

A staggering number of houses and buildings simply collapsed, virtually destroying Haiti's fragile infrastructure.

More than 200,000 people were killed and an estimated 1.5 million more were displaced.

Americans and people from all over the world donated money, organized shipments of medicine, food and water, and traveled to Haiti as emergency relief workers to help rescue and treat earthquake victims.

Prior to the earthquake, Haiti was already the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Today, Haiti suffers from widespread unemployment, with 80 percent of the population living under the poverty line.

Historically, Haiti has also been devastated by tropical storms. In 2004, Hurricane Jeanne struck Haiti, killing approximately 3,000 of its residents, and displacing over 200,000 more.

Just last year, Haiti narrowly missed being struck by Hurricane Thomas, while hundreds of thousands of Haitians were living in temporary tents camps suffering from the spread of cholera.

While we cannot undo the terrible damage of the January 2010 earthquake, we can show the best of American compassion, generosity, and ingenuity in helping the Haitian people rebuild their nation by addressing one of the underlying causes of the country's problems—the deforestation of Haiti's once plentiful tropical forests.

When you look at the lush green of the Dominican Republic and compare it to the stark desolation on Haiti's side of the border, it is easy to see why Haiti is so much more vulnerable to soil erosion, landslides, and flooding than its neighbor.

It was not always that way. In 1923, Haiti's tropical forest covered 60 percent of the country.

Today, less than 2 percent of those forests remain. In the past 5 years, the deforestation rate has accelerated by more than 20 percent.

Since 1990, Haiti has lost 22 percent of its remaining forest and woodland habitat.

This deforestation has had terrible, unintended consequences. The soil erosion that has resulted from cutting down all of these trees has made the island more vulnerable to floods and mudslides—substantially reducing Haiti's already scarce agricultural land and rendering what remains less productive.

Haiti's tropical forests, if protected and regrown, would fight the destructive effects of soil erosion.

Saving old and growing new tropical forests would help protect Haiti's freshwater sources from contaminants, would safeguard Haiti's remaining irrigable land, and would save lives during hurricane season.

Helping Haiti deal with its deforestation problems is not only the right thing to do for our nearby neighbors, it is the smart thing to do with our limited assistance dollars.

Senators COLLINS and KERRY join me in introducing the Haiti Reforestation Act to reverse the deforestation challenge. The bill aims to end within 5 years deforestation in Haiti and restore within 30 years the tropical forest cover in existence in Haiti in 1990.

While it is important to start putting trees in the ground, this bill is about more than just planting trees. Our government has tried that approach in the past and it has proven to be ineffective.

This bill empowers the U.S. Government to work with Haiti to develop forest-management programs based on proven, market-based models. These models will be tailored to help Haiti manage its conservation and reforestation efforts in ways that can be measured, and it does so without authorizing any new funding.

In last year's supplemental we provided \$25 million for reforestation pro-

grams in Haiti. This bill would make sure such existing funds are spent wisely and productively.

Haiti's former Prime Minister, Michele Pierre-Louis, sized up the problem in Haiti perfectly:

The whole country is facing an ecological disaster. We cannot keep going on like this. We are going to disappear one day. There will not be 400, 500 or 1,000 deaths [from hurricanes]. There are going to be a million deaths.

We must act to ensure that that day never comes. I urge my colleagues to support the Haiti Reforestation Act of 2011.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS GRIGSBY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the incredible endeavors of a hardworking and extremely talented Kentuckian, Chris Grigsby of Laurel County, KY. Chris's lifetime of experience has taken him to many places, but he has always been proud to call Kentucky home.

Chris Grigsby graduated from Laurel County High School in London, KY. At the age of nine he taught himself how to play the guitar, mandolin, bass, and the fiddle, and continues to play and teach them to his family, stating that music is a major part of his life. After graduating high school, Mr. Grigsby enrolled in the Marine Corps.

Mr. Grigsby's passion for his position in the Marine Corps grew as he continued to travel the world and experience the endless opportunities that it provided. He was stationed for 2 years at Camp David where he was able to work closely with President Ronald Reagan. As his years in the Marine Corps came to a close, Grigsby found talent in other professions including, auctioning, truck driving, as well as being a police and security officer.

After working as a truck driver for 3 years, then as an officer with the London Police Department, as well as conducting his own truck hauling service, Grigsby came to realize his true passion was to be closer to home with his wife Bobbie and their family of five. As he set aside his traveling days he was offered a job at the U.S. Courthouse where he continues to be the lead court security officer. This August 17, Chris and Bobbie will celebrate their 21st marriage anniversary.

Chris Grigsby is a man who gives so others can prosper, and leads by setting an example. His life stands as an illustration that kindness does go a long way. A wonderful article about Mr. Chris Grigsby appeared recently in the Sentinel Echo, and I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel Echo, May 2, 2011]

ALL THAT HE'S DONE, HIS CHILDREN ARE HIS
NUMBER ONE

(By Sue Minton)

If gas prices were as high in 1968 as they are today, then 2-year-old Chris Grigsby and